



TOPICS

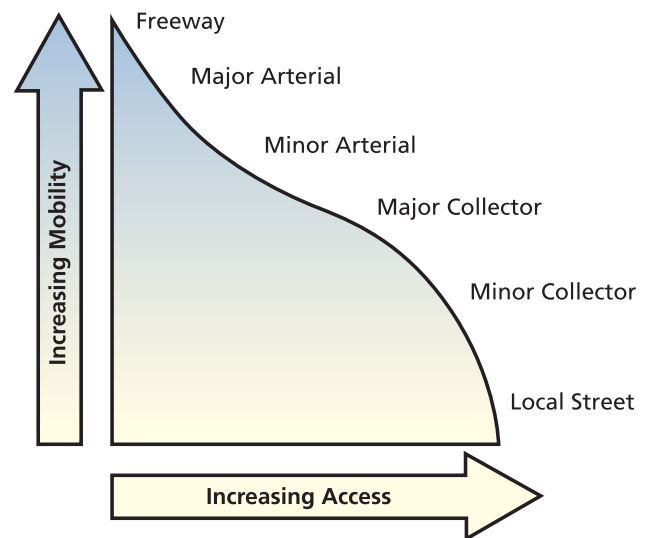
March 2008

Recipe for a Successful Site: Access, Access, Access

The site with the best location, visibility, soils, and topography may not always be the optimal place for your next development. On par with these considerations, or even more important, is traffic access. If your customers, residents, or employees are unable to access your site, project feasibility is doubtful.

A focus on access management by local and state transportation authorities, while non-existent as recently as ten years ago, has become of paramount importance today. The idea behind managing, or limiting, access is that all roads are part of a functional hierarchy. The purpose of the highest functional class roads, or freeways, is entirely mobility, while that of the lowest class streets (think cul-de-sacs) is almost fully land access. Limiting the number of driveways on roadways in proportion to their functional class is the best way to maintain high mobility where needed.

With access management plans in place, state and local governments implement these plans via access permits when land is developed or redeveloped. Although permits can be disputed, courts have applied a standard of "reasonably suitable and convenient" access. Even parcels adjacent to a high functional class roadway are not necessarily entitled to access if there is a reasonably suitable and convenient alternative via a lower functional class roadway.



In most cases, inflexible access locations or spacing for the roadway adjacent to your development will already have been specified by access management plans. Such cases highlight the need for analysis of traffic constraints early in project Pre-Design. Instead of focusing only on constraints within the site, a smooth and efficient planning process also depends upon consideration of how your project will connect with the surrounding community.

Certain situations do warrant further investigation to determine whether specified access locations are reasonably suitable and convenient. A site may have topographical constraints that make adhering to the prescribed spacing guidelines impossible. Or, traffic operations on the nearby roadway network may actually be improved by a deviation from the access plan. On one recent project, for example, a thorough traffic analysis and simulation showed that adding an intermediate access point dispersed site traffic to multiple access locations. Although this additional access point was not initially allowed by county spacing guidelines, the traffic study showed that it would cause less delay at nearby intersections and improve travel speeds along the county road corridor.

TOPICS



Whether site access is straightforward or traffic studies are needed to justify appropriate alternatives, a review of traffic access is part of a comprehensive Pre-Design analysis. Your project will benefit from engaging a team of traffic professionals who understand access management and have the experience and judgment to determine when access plan modifications are a worthwhile investment.



For more information, contact
Allan Klugman, Senior Traffic Engineer
allan.klugman@westwoodps.com
952-906-7418

Solutions
for *your* **Success**
LAND · ENERGY



Westwood